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# CONSTRUCTION OF EMPATHY TEST FOR FOSTER PARENTS

by

© Roberta Nadine Vester

A THESIS

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Construction of Empathy Test for Foster Parents" submitted by Roberta Nadine Vester in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Psychology.

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Date March 13/75

## Abstract

This investigation was carried out to provide additional information regarding the selection of foster homes for placement of children. A perusal of the literature is inconclusive as it appears to deal mainly with the child, with maternal deprivation and its consequences, and with the characteristics of the people who volunteer their homes for fostering. Little research has been done in the area of increasing the chances of selecting a substitute home for a child that would offer that child and atmosphere of healthy emotional, mental, and physical growth. We have made the assumption that the information that trained social workers include in a home study is relevant. There is need for systematic investigation of this assumption.

Initially, the author hypothesized that the ability to discriminate empathy is a desirable characteristic for foster parents to possess. Using a modification of Carkhuff's empathy scales, a Foster Parent Empathy Test (FPET) was constructed. The FPET was administered by mail to 15 sets of parents selected at random from the City of Edmonton Telephone Directory. Their results were compared with the 24 foster mothers and 18 foster fathers who completed the test, the foster parents being selected on the basis of the ages of the children they were fostering at

that time.

The test results obtained from the foster parents were correlated with the results obtained by the children in their homes, ages 107 to 136 months, on the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS), the California Test of Personality (CTP), and Coopersmith's Self-esteem Inventory (SEI). Length of fostering experience of the parents and length of placement of the child in this home were also correlated with the test results of both the foster parents and the children.

The results indicate that the parents, both father and mother, from the general population had a significantly lower error score, and therefore a higher empathy score, on the FPET than obtained by the foster parents.

In completing the correlational analysis, the FPET scores showed no significant relationships with any other variables. However, length of placement of the child in this home was significantly positively related with sense of personal worth on the CTP and negatively related with social standards on the same test.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

According to conventional wisdom, the ideal family for rearing children in North America consists of two constant and loving parents and two children (ideally a boy and a girl) all biologically related. Yet many children in the world are not raised in such a family setting.

There are throughout the world many "solutions" to the problem of rearing children to adulthood without family contact, i.e., with their own biological family. Abandonment is one method, placement in an orphanage another, and placement of the child with a substitute family a third. Social work literature generally indicates that placement of the child with a family is the "solution" which best matches the conventionally ideal family setting. This study attempts to focus on the choosing of the substitute family best able to meet the individual child's needs.

### Some Historical Solutions

George (1970), in his book Foster Care Theory and Practice, traces the history of foster care in nineteenth century England. The problem of "pauper children" was first dealt with through baby farming, the workhouse, and the apprentice system. In 1867, the boarding out system began to be adopted in an organized manner. George refers to the report of the Eton Guardians.

> After a three years' trial of boarding out, they concluded in their report that in both the workhouse

> and the district school "children are brought up under conditions the very reverse of those, which by the very constitution of human society and by the experience of all time, are pointed out as naturally best adapted for the development of the child's powers, physical, intellectual, and moral." What was lacking in institutional life was the natural experience of family life where the child "learns to bear and forbear, to seek help and to give it, to suffer and to enjoy, and out of many failures to act, as out of many falls to learn to work." Family life was in contrast to "the wearying monotony" and "the atmosphere of mechanical routine and compulsory discipline" of institutions (p.8).

George (1970) outlines some of the reasons for opposing the policy of "boarding out" when it was implemented in the 1860's and the objections still have a familiar sound. Boarding children with people wealthier than the parents would encourage those parents to try to give their children a better life by boarding them out. Irresponsible parents might be encouraged to produce more children as it was made relatively easy to abandon them. City children placed in rural areas would have less access to a good education. There was an inevitable fear that "boarding out," because it was similar in some respects to apprenticeship and child farming, would lead to ill treatment and neglect. That fear is still with us.

## The Problem Under Investigation

The problem is the selection of a substitute family best able to meet a particular child's emotional needs after his removal from his own family. Separation of child from parents is a traumatic experience for all concerned and a review of the literature illustrates the extent of the

problem. Child welfare agencies address themselves to policies of placement designed to minimize the trauma and to meet the needs of the children. Following is an outline of the policy of the Province of Alberta, defining the children who need care, and how the provincial agency attempts to meet these needs.

Current Child Placement Policies in Alberta

Ultimately, every citizen is responsible for child welfare. However, for administrative purposes, the legal responsibility rests with the Department of Health and Social Development in Alberta. It is the child welfare workers of that Department who translate this responsibility into day to day practice. All matters of neglect and wardship are channelled through their offices. Custody matters among relatives are Supreme Court actions that do not involve a child welfare worker unless there is a question of neglect.

Sayle (1936) outlines a number of ways in which foster parents clearly differ from biological parents, and these differences are still relevant.

> Clearly there can be:
>
> 1. No physical bond between mother and child and (usually) no bond formed by nursing and care from the earliest days;
> 2. No heredity common to the two generations;
> 3. No responsibility for bringing the child into the world;
> 4. No prenatal rejection (p. 7).
>
> While these differences are also true of adoptive

parents, adoptive parents differ from foster parents in legal relationship. A foster parent offers a temporary home to a child for whatever period of time that is necessary.

In Alberta, a child must be placed in one of three legal categories before he can be taken into care. These categories are: (1) custody by agreement, (2) temporary ward, and (3) permanent ward.

With custody by agreement, the child is not made a ward and the parents retain guardianship. The parents surrender custody to the Director of Child Welfare for a specified period of time and for a specified purpose, e.g., placement of a retarded child in home for special care.

Wardship involves either surrender and indenture or court action. A child is made a temporary ward by a Judge of the Juvenile and Family Court on presentation of a case of neglect made by a child welfare worker. Neglect in this context is a legal matter and is defined by the Child Welfare Act. A child may also be made a temporary ward by being so adjudged under the Juvenile Delinquents Act. Permanent wardship, via court, can only be granted by a Judge of the District Court. However, an unmarried or a married couple can voluntarily surrender a child directly to the Director of Child Welfare, transferring to him all legal rights and responsibilities. A permanent ward is legally free for adoption. The question of children in adoptive homes is outside the scope of this study.

Foster home placement is generally first choice. When it appears, for whatever reason, that a child is no longer able to remain in his own home, the first question that arises is whether the needs of the child would be best met by foster home placement. Some children are removed from their homes because they are in need of treatment for behavior and emotional problems. These children go directly to treatment centres. The Government of Alberta policy manual (1974) states

> Fostering is protecting and nurturing a child through a period of parentlessness. Each child coming into care should be given a sound family life experience which can be best met, in most instances, by living with substitute parents (foster parents) during the time that he cannot reside with his own natural parents (p. 1, CW 7).

When it is decided that a child may benefit from foster home placement, the workers must then determine whether a foster home is available which will meet this child's needs. Frequently, the workers are faced with choosing not a home tailored to this child but the one which will be the least damaging to his future adjustment. While the home chosen may be a good home for another child, for this child the most favorable factor may be that it has an empty bed.

Discontinuity of placement. The child welfare worker's primary objective, with a temporary ward, is to return him to his own home. The worker can only hope that the loss of their child will motivate the parents to work to this end also. This is not always the result. Sometimes the parents

under stress simply leave the geographic area. Frequently though, a child is returned home as soon as it appears hopeful that the parents will be better able to care for him. However, the added stress of caring for the child at home again can cause the situation to deteriorate and necessitate his removal for a second time. This time he goes to a different foster home as the first one in which he was placed has a new foster child. This is one of the problems brought about by a chronic foster home shortage.

A second reason for discontinuity is foster home breakdown. The foster home in which the child is placed is not able to accept his deviant behavior after the initial period of his pleasing behavior had ended. A demand is made for the child to be removed. The desire to have the child removed becomes overwhelming. Some foster parents in this stage react so completely to their own needs that it could be very damaging to the child to have him remain in this family for the time necessary to complete preplacement visits with another foster setting.

The trauma of separation. Littner (1956) emphasizes that separation and placement is a traumatic experience and describes the separation as leading to a

> feeling of abandonment, which contains elements of loss, rejection, humiliation, complete insignificance, and worthlessness (p.4).

In order to deal with his feelings, the child converts them from the feelings of being the helpless, powerless pawn to

being the "bad one" who made it all happen. Littner indicates that the child has difficulty managing one such separation so that a series of moves intensifies the harm done to the child. Murphy (1963) contends that repeated foster family moves can likely produce "ineradicable disturbances" for children, although the degree and kind of disturbance is probably related to the meaning of the experience for the child, his vulnerability, and multiple individual differences.

Charnley (1955) indicates that, in some cases, the first placement of the child should be planned as being temporary. This will allow the child to spill out his rage and pain at being abandoned by his parents. The second placement will have a much better chance of lasting. She implies that planning in this way, and making parents and child aware of the plan, takes the stigma and failure from the subsequent move. Her plan argues in favor of an emergency placement centre with diagnotic services to be used to allow the child to go through this period. Such a centre would enable the worker to get to know the child so as to match him with a suitable foster home.

Child welfare workers often do not have the time to do the preplacement work that would improve the standard of care for the children. Ideally the stress of moving could be reduced by preliminary visits and good casework with the child and both sets of parents.

Present Problems in Operating the Foster Home Program

Over the past years, many workers in the field (and experienced foster parents agree) have noticed a change in the problems of the child who comes into care (George, 1970). Before the public assistance program was extended, children were being removed from their homes because the parents could not provide for them in material ways. Now, in Alberta, public assistance takes care of basic needs where there is unemployment, illness, no breadwinner, etc. Under this program there is access to teaching homemakers, public health visitors, home economics information, psychiatric services, probation services, and casework services. Before a child is removed from his home, the child welfare worker is expected to have exhausted every other resource available in the community. Apprehension, i.e., a technical term for the legal removal of the child by a child welfare worker, is the last resort.

Therefore, in the main, the child comes into care from a family where there is obvious neglect. The child may be any age from birth to his teens and is likely exhibiting behavior problems. Hence, he will place a heavy burden on his foster parents. George indicates that if the "child is four or more years old and the child has exhibited behavior problems" foster home care would likely fail. It is not encouraging that this is the only attribute he could relate to success or failure.

Selection process in Alberta. Applicants for foster children are subjected to a home study by a child welfare worker. Enquiries are made into the financial circumstances and health of the family, its makeup, the physical conditions of the home, some idea of the parents' own life experiences, their flexibility, and the type of home they could offer a child. In the hands of a skilled worker, this selection process works well in choosing a home. However, George (1970) is critical of information that workers, both trained and untrained, included in their assessment of foster homes. The reports were, in the majority, deficient in basic psychological factors and did not show the parents' strengths and weaknesses. He states that "there is a need for a more systematic approach" (p. 142).

Restating the Problem

The main body of research about foster care appears to be about the child, about maternal deprivation and its consequences, and about the people who volunteer their homes for fostering. A number of books have been written about the placement of the child and supporting casework services based on the authors' child welfare experience. The writer has been unable to discover any studies which relate foster parent characteristics to any measures of adjustment of the child.

Many of the writers outline the problems inherent in operating a foster home program. They parallel the findings

of this writer who has worked in this area for ten years. First, there is the difficulty of recruiting placement resources. How do we encourage people to offer themselves and their homes? Second, there is the problem of selecting the applicants so that only qualified parents will be accepted for placement of a child. Being qualified means having a cluster of desirable characteristics of behavior or potential behavior related to the management of children. Third, there is the question of how the child is supervised in the foster home and how casework services are offered to his foster parents, the child, and his biological parents. What is the best plan for the child? Should he be made a permanent ward? Can he return to his own home?

Treatment of the family is outside the scope of this study. This study is addressed to the second question, that of determining before placement whether a couple is qualified. In an attempt to deal with this question, the writer conducted an extensive review of the literature currently available on foster homes. Felker (1974) outlines some characteristics that she thinks are important for fostering, based on her experience as a foster parent. She suggests that a foster couple should have a commitment to the child to give their best efforts day after day. She suggests that they must be flexible, consistent, willing to listen to the child, able to analyze his behavior, be creative in meeting and solving problems, and be honest with themselves as well as with the

child. She advises foster parents to get acquainted with the child and attempt to understand him, in other words to empathize. The writer will attempt to focus on this last characteristic, the ability to empathize, and to construct a test to determine whether a person shows the ability to discriminate an empathic response. An attempt will be made to relate the characteristic to measures of adjustment of the child.

Bowlby (1952) indicates that a mother figure is vital, particularly to age three. A child who does not receive "tender loving care" tends to be retarded in his physical, intellectual, and emotional development

## Chapter II

## Review of the Literature

What can a review of the literature tell us about choosing foster homes? What do we know about foster children? Alberta is not alone in having difficulty recruiting foster parents who will be successful. Very little research is available for predicting whether a particular couple will offer a child an atmosphere of healthy physical, mental, and emotional growth. The literature regarding foster homes offers little help. George (1970) criticizes foster home reports for being deficient in basic psychological factors but what psychological factors should be included? As he points out, we do not know which areas have direct relevance in predicting success. Are any of the questions on the home study relevant to this goal? It appears that we do not know. George further says

> It may well be that the observations of trained officers were more valid than those of untrained officers. This, however, will have to be proved and not merely taken for granted as it is currently being done by social work theorists (p. 141).

Generally speaking, children raised in foster homes experience more psychological difficulties than children raised with their own parents. Because of this finding, an examination of the literature dealing with psychotherapy and other methods of relating effectively with children was undertaken. As regards psychotherapy and quality parent-

child relationships, an important behavioral quality for the parents and psychotherapists is the possession of copious amounts of empathy. The writer hypothesizes that one criterion for success as foster parents is the possession of empathy or the potential for acquiring it. Consequently, Carkhuff's (1970) work on measurement of empathy, one of his core conditions for healthy functioning, is reviewed.

Literature Pertaining to Foster Homes

Taylor and Starr (1967) say that the more adequate foster parents are younger, have well-adjusted children, show warmth, understanding, and appropriate behavior in relating to the child. They focus on "giving." They accept that the natural parents are significant persons in the child's life. The least adequate parents are the converse of the above. As well, they exercise strict and "omnipotent" control, prefer preschool children, live in the suburbs, "overemphasize academic performance," and have children younger than the child they propose to foster. Further, a significant motive is "undoing parental deprivation," i.e., being the child's "savior." Taylor and Starr caution that these judgements have been made by social workers and may be biased in the direction of middle class values of that which constitutes a successful qualification.

The successful foster parent role analysis. Fanshel (1966) attempted to discover which persons are likely to make successful foster parents, whether they are successful

in dealing with all children's problems, or whether success is more confined to a specific age and accompanying problems. Success was measured by having the workers quantify their perceptions of the foster parents on a Foster Parent Appraisal Form. Foster parents were subjected to a structured interview. They also completed the Parental Attitude Research Instrument.

The attitude on the interview schedule expressed as "benefactress of children" was positively correlated with the "anomie scale" (disillusionment with society and its institutions) and with pathogenic scales on the Parental Attitude Research Instrument such as

> Fostering Dependency, Seclusion of the Mother, Breaking the Will, Martyrdom, and Suppression of Sex, and are also significantly negatively correlated with more wholesome manifestations of parental attitudes such as Comradeship and Sharing (p. 89).

The results of the Foster Parent Appraisal Form were factor analyzed and ten factors identified. The factor Fanshel calls "Parental Adequacy" (Ego Strength in the parent role) accounted for the largest common factor variance.

> The variables with the highest loadings in this factor include the foster mother's understanding of child behavior, her understanding of her own emotional needs as a foster parent, her ability to behave toward the child in accordance with his needs, her ability to respond to suggestions from the caseworker about her child rearing practices, and her ability to report to the caseworker significant data about the child's personality (p. 110).

These parents also respond to a wide variety of youngsters with different needs and personalities. This factor was

also negatively correlated with all the scores on the Parental Attitude Research Instrument which are considered not conducive to emotional health. Fanshel's "Parental Adequacy" appears to encompass important characteristics in foster parents' success and the foster parents considered to possess this factor appear to resemble Carkhuff's (1970) "facilitative" person.

Parental motivation. Dinnage and Pringle (1967), in discussing motivation, "indicate that the least successful fostering was associated with the needs to compensate for dissatisfaction, to overcome feelings of guilt, or to be important to a dependent." These are all needs of the parent, not the child. They further comment on foster home breakdown that, "while there appears to be a definitive association" between the breakdown of the foster home and emotional maladjustment of the child, there does not appear to be a simple and direct causal relationship. This may be the most important reason for the disruption of fostering arrangements, particularly if the maladjustment is due to "previous rejection by parental figures. . . . It seems that the younger the child when first fostered, the greater the likelihood" that the placement will be successful and stable (p. 14).

The Foster Child

Weinstein (1960) found that the child's well-being (as rated by workers) is positively related to the adequacy of

their understanding of the situation that led to their being taken into care. It is also positively related to visits from the natural parents, even when the child is closely identified with the foster family.

Coopersmith (1967), in his study on self-esteem, found that significantly more children who scored low on his self-esteem inventory had one or more step-parents, foster parents, or guardians in their life history. The number was so small as to be only suggestive.

Such studies as have been done (Ferguson, 1966, as summarized in Dinnage & Pringle; Meier, 1965 and 1966; and Baker & Holzworth, 1961) indicate that children who have grown up in foster homes are, on the whole, better adjusted than those from institutions. This raises the question whether the better adjusted, better behaved children were placed initially because they were more likely to last in a foster situation. These people did have more difficulties than children raised in their own homes or with relatives. Meier (1965) found her group more stable than their parents. However, one must assume instability on the part of the parents; otherwise, the children would not have needed placement. A high proportion of the men were living apart from their wives; illegitimacy, stillbirths, and miscarriages were more frequent than in the general population; the subjects seemed to lack a sense of satisfaction not in line with their actual achievements. Baker and Holzworth (1961)

found their subjects had more early psychological difficulties (such as enuresis beyond three years, and temper tantrums).

Literature on Child Centred Approaches

A number of writers suggest that empathy is a necessary factor for relating to children effectively.

Axline's play therapy. Axline (1947) views each individual as possessing a drive toward "maturity, independence, and self-direction" which is powerful and continuously striving for realization. A child is a very flexible, complex, and spontaneous being, if he is allowed to grow up in an atmosphere of psychological safety in which his feelings are accepted.

Every individual must have a feeling of self-esteem, self-worth. Non-directive play therapy aims at creating these feelings of self-worth in children who have known little love and even less security. Play therapy enables the child to express emotion as the adult would express it verbally in therapy. The child moves at his own pace and does or says anything he feels. The therapist is not a passive spectator. He attempts to be keenly aware, empathic, to the feelings of the child which he is expressing in his play and verbalizations. He mirrors these feelings back to him in "such a way as to help him understand himself a little better" (p. 18).

Axline (1947) recounts the case of "Mother R," a foster

mother with "remarkable insight" who "gave the boys freedom to express themselves; she accepted them as they are." The boys improved in functioning until they no longer had a need for the initially maladjusted behavior (p. 268).

Therapy is aimed at helping the child deal with reality. Destructive actions need not be accepted, but the feelings behind the actions are. Self-control becomes the control of action, not of feelings, and an enormous burden is lifted from the child.

Ginott on relating to children effectively. Ginott (1965) gives many specific examples of relating to children in an empathic way, in a way that lets the child know we understand how he feels and what he means. He says

> Conversing with children is a unique art with rules and meanings of its own. Children are rarely naive in their communications. Their messages are often in a code that requires deciphering (p. 17).
>
> When a child feels understood, his loneliness and hurt diminish, because they are understood, and his love for mother is deepened because she understands. Mother's sympathy serves as an emotional band-aid for the bruised ego (p. 20).
>
> The new code of communication with children is based on respect and skill. It requires (a) that messages preserve the child's as well as the parent's self-respect; (b) that statements of understanding precede statements of advice and instruction (p. 21).

Ginott says that children under strong emotional stress are not able to listen. They want understanding. This can lessen the emotional intensity so that the child can deal with the situation and can listen to advice. Ginott advises that we can use our own experience in similar situations

and our observations of the child to help us to understand how he is feeling. Our observational power comes from our own functioning. If we are not intensely bound up in our own unmet needs, we can see the other person that much more clearly.

Gordon's parent effectiveness training (P.E.T.). Gordon (1970) outlines the concept of "active listening" in which the listener (parent) feeds back to the sender (child) only what he thinks the sender's message meant, no more and no less, accurately decoding the child's feelings. He says that "active listening" is the key to solving the conflict of needs inevitable in any normal household. Damage to the relationship is avoided by not emphasizing a "win or lose" approach.

> To empathize with another is to see him as a separate person, yet be willing to join with him or be with him. . . . Parents who learn empathic active listening discover a new kind of appreciation, a respect, a deeper feeling of caring; in turn, the child responds to the parent with similar feelings (p. 58).

Measurement of Empathy

As it is hypothesized that empathy is a criterion of successful fostering, it is necessary to examine the possibility of measuring this quality. Carkhuff (1970) has done extensive work based on the theory that one can measure empathy.

He contends that, in any of our significant relationships, there is a member who can be designated by society as "more knowing" (helper) and one who is "less knowing"

(helpee). The helper has an effect on the helpee that is either facilitative, neutral, or destructive depending on how effectively the helper is functioning himself. The main areas of functioning with which Carkhuff is concerned are those of the "core conditions" of empathy, genuineness, congruence, and concreteness. These helper-helpee encounters can be seen as "crisis points" in the lives of both. They are the points at which the individual being helped "may be retarded or facilitated in his physical, emotional, or intellectual growth" (p. 21). The parallel of helper-helpee to foster parent-child is obvious.

Levels of functioning. Carkhuff outlines the possibility of rating each of the facilitative conditions on a five point scale. He views a relationship as a series of responses between helper and helpee that can be rated on the various core dimensions. Level three is the level of minimally facilitative functioning with level five being optimum. His complete scale of measurement of empathy is found in Appendix A.

Growth or deterioration is reflected in the individual's ability, increasing or decreasing, "(1) to understand his physical, emotional, and intellectual worlds and (2) to act upon these worlds" (p. 24).

If one could measure the potential for empathy possessed by prospective foster parents, one might be able to select more successful parents. To this end, the writer has

attempted to develop a paper and pencil test to measure whether foster parents can discriminate an empathic response to a stimulus statement. Discrimination in this sense is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for communicating empathy. The personal interviews presently conducted in a home study can provide additional opportunities for observing and communicating empathy.

## Chapter III

### Procedure and Design

For the purpose of this study, the following definition of empathy will be used: Empathy is the understanding of inner feelings, not necessarily as the person is expressing them verbally. It is the ability to see things from the other person's point of view. Empathy is a sensitivity to the other person's feelings (Traux & Carkhuff, 1967). Communication of empathy is the ability to communicate the understanding of the person's current feelings in a language that illustrates to that person that you perceive both the kind and intensity of his feelings.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the foster parents' error scores on the Foster Parent Empathy Test (FPET) and error scores achieved on the same test by parents in Edmonton as chosen at random from the City of Edmonton Telephone Directory, scores being designed to indicate the higher the error score the lower the ability to discriminate empathic response.
2. Can a relationship be found between the foster parents' duration of experience from first placement of a foster child and their scores on the FPET.
3. Can a relationship be found between empathy of foster parents and level of adjustment of foster children. Empathy

will be measured by FPET and adjustment will be measured by the California Test of Personality (CTP), the Self-esteem Inventory (SEI), and the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS).

4. Can a relationship be found between the duration of the foster parents' experience and level of adjustment of foster children.

5. Can a relationship be found between the length of the child's placement in this home and his level of adjustment.

Development of Test Used with Foster Parents

The procedure for measurement of empathy already formulated by Carkhuff (1970) was considered and rejected. Carkhuff had never addressed himself to the foster home situation and it was assumed that a new test developed specifically for foster parents would have more face validity. This test could be related directly to foster children. Face validity was assumed to be important to encourage cooperation of the sample which, of necessity, was volunteer. Also, experience suggested that foster parents would have difficulty responding with paper and pencil to open-ended stimulus statements. The test developed provided less complication for the parents' responses. During the simplification procedure the test became a measurement of discrimination of empathic response rather than measurement of ability to communicate. The results still have potential for practical application (Carkhuff,

1970).

> Effective communication, in turn, is made possible only by sensitive and accurate discrimination, a function that is necessary but not sufficient for high-level communication (p. 84, vol. 1).

Generating stimulus statements. In developing the discrimination test finally used, the writer and two child welfare workers (one of whom had grown up in a foster home) generated a number of stimulus statements. An attempt was made to classify the statements as to content pertaining to affect expressed and problems areas mentioned (Carkhuff, 1970). The goal was to have each statement contain one feeling and the total test contain a variety of affect expressions, e.g., hostility or elation.

Pilot test. A pilot test of 21 statements was administered to 13 people. They were asked to respond in the most empathic way possible to these statements. They were asked to respond as if they were foster parents. The background of these 13 varied; one was a housewife, one a teacher of deaf children, one an engineer, two were child welfare workers, and eight were graduate students of the Department of Educational Psychology. Responses were then rated by several graduate students in Educational Psychology.

Second test. This test was evolved by taking the 12 statements that showed the most spread in response. Deleted were the statements which had both uniformly empathic and non-empathic elements. To the remaining 12 statements, responses were attached that appeared to range from level 1 to level 3

in empathic understanding. The source of these responses were the statements made to the pilot test and some additional responses generated by the writer, a child welfare worker, and a psychologist.

This form of the test was then submitted to a further group of raters who were asked to score the responses "high," "medium," or "low" as they thought the statement communicated what the child was thinking and feeling at the time. One further item was deleted as no agreement on rating could be reached.

The raters, besides the writer, consisted of two psychologists, two social workers, a social work student, and three child welfare workers.

Foster Parent Empathy Test (FPET). As a result of the foregoing procedures, the final form of the test was composed of 11 items, each with three responses designated to be a high, medium, and low empathy rating. Age and sex of the child making each statement was added as this was assumed to reduce the variability of response. The final form (Appendix B) contained instructions to the foster parents to rate the responses in terms of them being "good," "fair," or "poor" empathic responses to the stimulus statements made by the children.

In scoring the test, the test was administered separately to each parent and scored for each. The score assigned is an error score. The magnitude of error was

squared for each item and then totalled over the whole test. To illustrate, if the predetermined answer is "fair" and the parent answered "poor," the error is "1" and squared is still "1." However, if the predetermined answer is "poor" and the parent answers "good," the error is "2" and squared is "4." Therefore, a greater delineation can be made for foster parents who do not discriminate within two levels.

Tests Used With Children

The tests administered to the children were the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS), the long form of the Self-esteem Inventory (SEI) developed by Coopersmith (1967), and Norm AA Primary Series of the California Test of Personality (CTP). While the Primary Series of the CTP is designed for kindergarten to Grade III it was used on all the children tested for ease of comparison of the scores.

No attempt was made to separate the SEI into its subscales. The subscales of the CTP were used as they are named and designated groupings of "more or less specific tendencies to feel, think, and act" (CTP manual, p. 3).

In administering the tests, the writer read the questions aloud to each child and noted down their answers.

Reliability

Regarding the empathy scales, nothing can be said about reliability as the scales have not been used previously.

According to the CTP manual, the reliability coefficients for both forms of the CTP over 255 cases, time lapse

between testings not mentioned, varies from 0.51 for Social Standards to 0.88 for Total Adjustment using the Kuder-Richardson formula. For the CMAS, test-retest reliability for three weeks was 0.89 and for 9-16 months was 0.81 using the Pearson product-moment coefficient (Castaneda, MaCandless, & Palermo, 1956). The SEI was normed on a total of 1,748 children in the public schools of central Connecticut. Test-retest reliability after five weeks was 0.88 and after three years 0.70 on a sample of these children (Coopersmith, 1967).

Validity

The validity of the empathy scales stems from the qualifications of the persons by whom they were constructed, as do Carkhuff's scales (Carkhuff, 1970). The test appears to have face validity in so far as the statements were taken from foster children to whom, in the past, real parents have attempted to respond.

Buros (1965) indicates that the CTP is as valid as most instruments which claim to measure "adjustment" and that evidence of validity is, of necessity, indirect.

The CMAS was developed from the adult form (Castaneda et al.). Taylor (1952) based the adult scale on Cameron's (1947) definition of anxiety as the

> predominantly covert skeletal and visceral reaction which, for an unhampered and uninhibited person, constitutes the normal preliminary phase of emotional flight, but which for some reason is prevented from going on into its consummatory phase (p. 147).

Validity is indicated indirectly. The scale correlated significantly with the Minnisota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) anxiety scale. Also the distribution of scores obtained on the adult form obtained by a group undergoing psychiatric treatment is significantly different from that of a normal group. The items were simplified for the children's form. Holloway (1961) normed the test on 462 third grade children in Tennessee. The mean on the anxiety scale was 21.45, SD 8.31. On the Lie scale, the mean was 5.58, SD 1.75.

Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as

> a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds toward himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior (p. 5).

The validity of his test is based on theoretical formulation of behaviors that manifest self-esteem. The test is also based on Rogers and Dymond scales (Coopersmith, 1966). In developing his scale, Coopersmith also had teachers and principals complete a Behavior Rating Form based on "theoretical and empirical grounds" (p. 11). He correlated the SEI to the Behavior Form, using this as an additional proof of validity of the SEI.

Sample

All the foster homes within the City of Edmonton limits, who had in their homes foster children born between January 1, 1963, and December 31, 1964, were contacted. Participation

was voluntary. Parents who could not complete the FPET due to lack of knowledge of the English language were excluded. Foster parents of mentally retarded children did not participate nor did those fostering deaf children.

As a comparison group, a random sample of names was taken from the City of Edmonton Telephone Directory. A letter was mailed with the FPET requesting participation if the addressee(s) were a couple, parents of children, and had not experience with fostering (see Appendix C). This sample was also confined to those whose addresses were within the city limits.

Characteristics of the Child Sample

The children varied in age from 107 to 136 months at the time they were tested. The age range chosen was old enough to respond to the tests but it was not yet the age of adolescence with its accompanying upheavals. The children could be said to be in the latency period which is one of relative stability in terms of emotional development (Baldwin, 1967).

The children varied in academic achievement, at time of interview, from a special Grade I to a regular Grade V.

Some sources of variability. The writer chose to test children in a limited age range in an attempt to reduce variability by reason of age alone, although this limited the numbers available for the study. It was assumed that it would be more valid to use a smaller number of subjects more

nearly the same age. This was another reason for confining the study to the city limits, all of which homes also had telephones.

However, a number of other sources of variability are already built into the population of foster children. The children were of various ages at the time of the initial placement. Their family backgrounds and reasons for placement varied a great deal. They may have had one placement or several during their lives. Ethnic and racial backgrounds were not homogeneous. One child was Negro, six were Canadian Indian or Metis extraction, and 17 appeared to be Caucasian. It is obvious that a child who is raised for the first years on a reserve with little exposure to city life will react differently to the test, the interview situation, the foster parents, than a white child who has been raised in similar physical and cultural surroundings to the foster home. A child who has been a member of this foster family since an early age will react differently to one who has just been separated from his own family. If the child has been moved several times, he will feel differently about himself than one who has been in only one foster home (Murphy, 1963). Weinstein (1960) indicates that a child who has visits with his natural parents has a better self image than one who never sees them. Some of the children in the sample were permanent wards which means that all contact with their parents has ceased. This is then another source

of variability.

Definition of Variables

Twenty-two variables (mostly scores or subscores) were utilized. These include:

1. foster parents' duration of experience, from first foster child placed to present time, expressed in months.
2. length of this child's placement in present foster home expressed in months.
3. foster father's FPET error score.
4. foster mother's FPET error score.
5. Children's MAS anxiety score.
6. Children's MAS lie score.
7. SEI general assessment of self-esteem score.
8. SEI lie score.

California Test of Personality (CTP) sub-section scores as follows:

9. Self reliance.
10. Sense of personal worth.
11. Sense of personal freedom.
12. Feeling of belonging.
13. Freedom from withdrawing tendencies.
14. Freedom from nervous symptoms.
15. Social standards.
16. Social skills.
17. Freedom from anti-social tendencies.
18. Family relations.
19. School relations.
20. Community relations.
21. Mother FPET score from the general population.
22. Father FPET score from the general population.

Treatment of Data

The foster fathers' error scores on the FPET were compared with the error scores of the fathers in the general

population by comparison of means using the t test. The mothers' scores were similarly treated (Glass and Stanley, 1970).

In examining relationships of the foster parents' scores to the measures used for the children, continuous variables are dealt with and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The null hypothesis was rejected at a level of significance of .05 where correlations had a magnitude greater than 0.40.

## Chapter IV

## Results

Analyses of the data were carried out as described in Chapter III. The first analysis involved test for significance of the comparisons of the mean error scores on the Foster Parent Empathy Test (FPET) of the (1) foster fathers when compared with fathers from the general population and (2) foster mothers when compared with the mothers from the general population (Table 1).

The second analysis of the data involved computation of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the (1) foster parents' duration of experience, (2) length of this child's placement in this home, (3) foster father's error score on the FPET, (4) foster mother's error score on the FPET, and (5) the scores on the various measures, the Self-esteem Inventory, the Children's Manifest Anxiety Sclae, and the Claifornia Test of Personality, used to measure "adjustment" in the children (Table 2).

The null hypotheses are set out below and are followed by the tables summarizing the results of the analyses. A level of significance of .05 was deemed necessary for rejection of the null hypothesis.

### Hypothesis Testing

The questions being looked at are:

1. Do the error scores achieved by the foster parents on the

Table 1

Comparison of Mean Error Scores on the

Foster Parent Empathy Test

| | General Population | | Foster Parents | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | Mother | Father | Mother |
| Mean error score | 22.9 | 23 | 36.5 | 32.8 |
| Variance | 66.1 | 56.8 | 225 | 252 |
| n of sample | 15 | 15 | 18 | 24 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| t test--Fathers | t = 3.14 | level of significance 0.01 |
| t test--Mothers | t = 2.22 | levle of significance 0.05 |

Table 2

Correlations between Experience Length, Placement Length, Foster Parent Empathy Test, and Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Self-esteem Inventory, and California Test of Personality

| | Couple's Experience | Placement Length | FF Empathy | FM Empathy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Placement length | 0.44* | | | |
| FF empathy | -0.06 | -0.03 | | |
| FM empathy | -0.08 | -0.16 | 0.76** | |
| CMAS anxiety | -0.20 | -0.08 | -0.12 | -0.07 |
| CMAS lie | 0.01 | 0.27 | 0.21 | 0.09 |
| SEI self-esteem | 0.19 | 0.31 | 0.15 | 0.11 |
| SEI lie | 0.00 | -0.02 | 0.01 | -0.05 |
| CTP self reliance | 0.08 | 0.16 | 0.11 | 0.11 |
| CTP personal worth | 0.12 | 0.54** | -0.10 | 0.01 |
| CTP personal freedom | 0.12 | 0.01 | 0.24 | -0.03 |
| CTP sense of belonging | 0.01 | -0.06 | 0.00 | -0.14 |
| CTP fdm. withdrawing tend. | 0.17 | 0.23 | 0.09 | -0.09 |
| CTP fdm. nervous symptoms | -0.03 | -0.33 | 0.04 | -0.06 |
| CTP social standards | -0.06 | -0.58** | -0.19 | -0.12 |
| CTP social skills | 0.14 | 0.25 | 0.10 | -0.13 |
| CTP fdm. anti-social tend. | 0.02 | 0.30 | 0.19 | -0.07 |
| CTP family relations | -0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | -0.06 |
| CTP school relations | -0.09 | 0.25 | -0.22 | -0.29 |
| CTP community relations | -0.19 | 0.02 | 0.13 | -0.03 |

** indicates a level of significance of .01
* indicates a level of significance of .05
FFn = 18, FMn = 24, Child n = 24

FPET differ significantly from scores achieved on the same test by parents chosen at random from the telephone directory.

2. Can a relationship be found between the foster parents' duration of experience and their FPET scores.

3. Can a relationship be found between the foster parents' FPET and level of adjustment of the children.

4. Can a relationship be found between the foster parents' duration of experience and level of adjustment of the child in the home.

5. Can a relationship be found between the length of the child's placement in this home and his level of adjustment.

The results. The results set out in Tables 1 and 2 were used to support or reject the following null hypotheses which were developed to answer these questions.

Question 1. A comparison of mean error scores was completed by means of the t test.

(1a) There is no significant difference between the error scores obtained by the foster fathers on the FPET and the fathers from the general population who completed the test.

(1b) There is no significant difference between the error scores obtained by the foster mothers on the FPET and the mothers from the general population who completed the test.

On the basis of the results reported in Table 1, null hypotheses 1a and 1b were rejected. The differences between means for the fathers and mothers were 13.6 and 9.8

respectively. It may be noted that the parents from the general population in both cases had the lower mean error scores and, therefore, the higher empathy scores.

Questions 2 to 5. Pearson product-moment correlations between the foster parents' duration of experience, the length of this child's placement in this home, the FPET error scores, and the scores of the various measures of adjustment of the children are reported in Table 2. The results were used to support or reject the following null hypotheses which were developed to answer questions 2 to 5.

2. There is no significant relationship between the couple's duration of foster experience and the foster father's or mother's score on the FPET.

This null hypothesis was not rejected.

3. There is no significant relationship between either foster parent's error score on the FPET and the child's score on any of the measures used to determine his adjustment, the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, and Self-esteem Inventory, or California Test of Personality (variables 5 to 20).

This null hypothesis was not rejected.

4. There is no significant relationship between the couple's duration of fostering experience and the child's scores on the adjustment measures.

This null hypothesis was not rejected.

5. There is no significant relationship between the length

of this child's placement in this foster home and his scores on the adjustment measures.

This null hypothesis was rejected. A positive correlation was found between the length of this placement and sense of personal worth on the CTP beyond the .01 level of significance. A negative correlation was found between length of this placement and social standards on the CTP beyond the .01 level of significance.

Summary of the Results

Conclusions were drawn regarding the five null hypotheses. These may be summarized as follows:

1. There is a significant difference between the error scores obtained by the foster parents, both mother and father, and those obtained by the general population on the FPET. In both cases the foster parents obtained the greater error scores.
2. The foster parents' duration of experience is not related to their FPET scores.
3. The FPET scores obtained by both father and mother appear to be unrelated to any measure of adjustment of the child.
4. The duration of experience of the parents' appears to be unrelated to any measure of adjustment of the child.
5. The length of this child's placement in this home is significantly related positively to the child's sense of personal worth on the CTP and negatively related to social

standards. There appear to be no other significant relationships to other measures used with the children regarding adjustment.

## Chapter V

## Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

### Discussion

The goal of this study was to attempt to construct a test, the Foster Parent Empathy Test (FPET), which could be used in screening foster home applicants to improve the chances that couples, approved for placement of a foster child, would offer to the child placed an atmosphere of empathic understanding, of facilitative growth conditions. The results of the study indicate that this goal was not attained as will become apparent as the various points are discussed.

There are a number of explanations which can be considered regarding the result that the parents, both fathers and mothers, of the general population attained error scores differing significantly from the foster parents. The first is obvious--the foster parents cannot discriminate empathic responses as well as can the general population. However, this explanation assumes that the test definitely measures empathy and little else. The test may simply measure a person's ability to complete the test. It is possible that the parents of the general population who responded, by completing the test and returning it, did so because they were verbally facile and able to complete it. The non-responders may have found the test difficult to

complete simply in terms of verbal facility.

Fanshel (1966) indicated that the foster parents he studied had brief education and were not given to introspection or verbalization. The foster parents who consented to take part did so even when they found the tests difficult. One of the couples interviewed advised that they had difficulty responding since the children they had fostered had never expressed anything similar to the situations mentioned on the test, i.e., they seemed unable to generalize from their experience with specific children. Charnley (1955) advises that people who apply as foster parents usually have unmet needs; these needs may block their ability to empathize.

The foster father error score is strongly correlated positively with the foster mother error score. This is to be expected as the variables are dependent.

The foster parents' error scores did not correlate significantly with any of the other variables. This does not necessarily mean that the ability to discriminate an empathic response is unrelated to the ability to provide an atmosphere in which the child can grow in healthy functioning. The sample size is too small to enable a definite conclusion to be reached and for significance to be established. As outlined earlier, there are a number of sources of variability inherent in the child population in question. The children have been in these particular foster

homes for periods of time that vary from one month to nine years. No attempt was made to determine from the child's file whether this was his first foster home placement or the current one of a series. No attempt was made to take into account the causes that necessitated the child being taken into care. Although the children's tests were administered individually by being read aloud to them, the varying academic levels of the children may have been a source of variability of response as well as their differences in perception of oral material.

Length of placement in this home is the variable which has some relationship with some measures of adjustment. It is positively related to sense of personal worth on the California Test of Personality (CTP). The child, according to the Test Manual, will "feel capable and reasonably attractive" and believe that he "is well regarded." This result tends to support those writers mentioned earlier who contend that repeated moves are damaging to the child.

Length of placement is negatively correlated with social standards on the CTP. The Test Manual defines this sub-section as indicating the "individual understands what is regarded as being right and wrong" and "understands the rights of others and who appreciated the necessity of subordinating certain desires to the needs of the group." A possible explanation is that the child who remains in a longer placement is past the first stage of initially

pleasing behavior (the honeymoon period) and is reacting with more honesty to his own feelings as he feels safer and more accepted by these parents.

Conclusions

No firm conclusions can be drawn without further investigation regarding the difference in mean error scores between foster parents and parents from the general population. It would likely be useful to undertake a comparison with the two populations where they were similar in educational level, age, level of income, family size, etc.

Some support is given to the writers who contend that repeated foster home moves are damaging to children, since it appears that the longer the placement the higher the score on sense of personal worth.

The results of this study do not support the writer's initial hypothesis that the ability to discriminate empathic response on the part of the foster parents has some relation to the healthy functioning of children in their homes. However, we cannot conclude that it is not a useful hypothesis as there are many sources of variability in the child population and our measurement procedures lack specifiability.

Implications for Further Research

Since, theoretically, the FPET has validity, further research might usefully involve administering this test to foster parents and correlating their error scores with some quantification of social workers' perceptions of these

parents' ability to foster. For example, it might be useful to conduct a comparison of foster parent already tested with the FPET with their social worker's completion of Fanshel's Foster Parent Appraisal Form.

A more useful study involving the children might be to test foster parents with the FPET prior to their first placement. The children could then be tested with measures of adjustment shortly after placement and then again six months later. The object would be to see if the children's adjustment scores showed any change and if the direction of change could be correlated to the foster parents' FPET scores. Alternatively, since there is a large source of variability in the backgrounds of the children, this might be reduced by confining the child sample to permanent wards who have been in their present home for more than a year. An investigation into the number of moves a child has had compared with his scores on the adjustment measures might show interesting results.

Some methods for determining the reasons why children remain in the same home for an increased length of time might be productive in improving foster home screening. Admittedly, some of the reasons may lie with the children but one can assume that there are characteristics inherent in the parents that contribute to longevity of placement.

Further research exploring the characteristics of foster parents in comparison with measures of healthy functioning children is definitely indicated.

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## Appendix A

### Scale 1

### Empathic Understanding in Interpersonal Processes

### A Scale for Measurement

Level 1

The verbal and behavioral expressions of the helper either do not attend to or detract significantly from the verbal and behavioral expressions of the helpee(s) in that they communicate significantly less of the helpee's feelings and experiences than the helpee has communicated himself.

Example: The helper communicates no awareness of even the most obvious, expressed surface feelings of the helpee. The helper may be bored or disinterested or simply operating from a preconceived frame of reference which totally excludes that of the helpee(s).

In summary, the helper does everything but express that he is listening, understanding, or being sensitive to even the most obvious feelings of the helpee in such a way as to detract significantly from the communications of the helpee.

Level 2

While the helper responds to the expressed feelings of the helpee(s), he does so in such a way that he subtracts noticeable affect from the communications of the helpee.

Example: The helper may communicate some awareness of obvious, surface feelings of the helpee, but his

communications drain off a level of the affect and distort the level of meaning. The helper may communicate his own ideas of what may be going on, but these are not congruent with the expression of the helpee.

In summary, the helper tends to respond to other than what the helpee is expressing or indicating.

Level 3

The expressions of the helper in response to the expressions of the helpee(s) are essentially interchangeable with those of the helpee in that they express essentially the same affect and meaning.

Example: The helper responds with accurate understanding of the surface feelings of the helpee but may not respond to or may misinterpret the deeper feelings.

In summary, the helper is responding so as to neither subtract from nor add to the expressions of the helpee. He does not respond accurately to how that person really feels beneath the surface feelings; but he indicates a willingness and openness to do so. Level 3 constitutes the minimal level of facilitative interpersonal functioning.

Level 4

The responses of the helper add noticeably to the expressions of the helpee(s) in such a way as to express feelings a level deeper than the helpee was able to express himself.

Example: The helper communicates his understanding of

the expressions of the helpee at a level deeper than they were expressed and thus enables the helpee to experience and/or express feelings he was unable to express previously.

In summary, the helper's responses add deeper feeling and meaning to the expressions of the helpee.

Level 5

The helper's responses add significantly to the feeling and meaning of the expressions of the helpee(s) in such a way as to accurately express feelings levels below what the helpee himself was able to express or, in the event of ongoing, deep self-exploration on the helpee's part, to be fully with him in his deepest moments.

Example: The helper responds with accuracy to all of the helpee's deeper as well as surface feelings. He is "tuned in" on the helpee's wave length. The helper and the helpee might proceed together to explore previously unexplored areas of human existence.

In summary, the helper is responding with a full awareness of who the other person is and with a comprehensive and accurate empathic understanding of that individual's deepest feelings.

Appendix B

Foster Parent Empathy Test

Following are statements made by children in foster care. After each statement are several explanations of the child's inner feelings. Please mark each of the explanations 'good', 'fair', or 'poor'. Mark and explanation 'good' if it included all or much of the child's feelings. Rate an expalnation 'fair' if it includes only part of the child's feelings, and 'poor' if it includes little or none of the child's feelings.

1. (Girl, age 10 years) Auntie Pat, I'm really mad at that dumb old teacher! She says I can't use your name, that my name is really Smith, not Jones, like yours. She says I'm a welfare kid. I can be Jones if I want to, can't I.

G The child would like to feel that she is part of the family and is angry at the teacher for saying she isn't. This makes her aware of her feelings of 'not quite belonging'.

P The child wants the foster mother to say that the teacher is lying.

F The child wants reassurance that she is part of the family though she knows her name is different. She isn't sure what being a 'welfare kid' means.

2. (Girl, age 11 years) Auntie Katie, it really makes me feel good when Vivian tells people about me, "This is one

of Katie's girls'.

___G___ It feels good to the child to have others sense that she is part of the family.

___P___ The child wants her foster mother to be pleased that she is part of the family.

___F___ The child feels like part of the family and, when relatives introduce her that way, it proves that she really belongs.

3. (Boy, age 5 years) The stimulus from the child is silence. (The worker has just returned to the foster home with the child after taking him for a visit to his mother. His mother was not home when they arrived at the appointed time not did she return during a half hour wait. The child goes to a chair and sits with his head in his hands.)

___P___ The child wants someone to explain to him why his mother was not there.

___F___ The child is hurt and disappointed and angry at his mother for not being there to see him. He feels she doesn't love him.

___G___ The child is hurting and disappointed, wondering if his mother cares for him.

4. (Girl, age 6 years) That mean Welfare Lady came one day and took me away from Mommy and Daddy. Why did she have to do that? Was it because I was bad?

___G___ The child is afraid that she will never see her parents again and thinks this is a punishment.

__F__ The child is very angry at the social worker and wonders if whe is punishing her for something she did but had been told not to do.

__P__ The child is angry at her parents for not protecting her from being taken away.

5. (Boy, age 8 years) Look, Mom, what I bought you for your birthday! I used up all my allowance. Isn't it keen!

__G__ The child is expressing the depth of his love by using all his allowance and is very pleased with his gift.

__P__ The child wants his foster mother to realize how much effort he put into saving for her gift.

__F__ The child is expressing love by giving his foster mother a gift.

6. (Boy, age 12 years) My dad said my mom is crazy and she went to Ponoka. Am I going to Ponoka too?

__P__ The child wants to know if his father lied to him.

__F__ The child is very worried about his mother and is afraid he is going to be sent away too.

__G__ The child feels confused and bewildered about what is happening to him and his familiar life.

7. Girl, age 7 years) Auntie, look! The teacher taught us how to make a Valentine at school today for out mothers. See! I made this one for you. I put on it "To my Other Mother."

__F__ The child wants the foster mother to tell her that she loves her as her mother.

__P__ The child wants her to say that she did a good job.

__G__ The child wants to please her foster mother as she really loves her although she realizes that she is not her real mother.

8. (Boy, age 6 year) Mom and Dad fought a lot and Dad would get drunk and start yelling. Then he's hit Mom with his fist. Mom would cry. You bought some beer. Daddy used to buy beer too. Are you going to get drunk?

__P__ The child would like to think that his own parents are good and he is wondering if buying beer is bad.

__G__ The child is afraid because seeing the beer reminds him of a lot of hurtful memories.

__F__ The child is upset and very fearful.

9. (Boy, age 14) Mom, how come my social worker and the judge told my mother I had to live with you?

__G__ The child is fearful and bewildered by the power of the judge and the social worker.

__F__ The child is somewhat angry at these two strangers making such an important decision about him. He wonders just who they are that they can do this to him.

__P__ The child knows why he is living with foster parents but he feels guilty about preferring to live there so he is emphasizing that it was not his decision.

10. (Girl, Age 14 year) I'm afraid to tell my social worker, Mom, but I don't want to go home. I know the judge said I was just here until school is out, but all my mother wants

me home for is to babysit while she fools around with her boyfriends.

___G___ The child is afraid of the disapproval of her social worker as she thinks she should love her mother.

___F___ The child feels scared and helpless to control any decisions about her life.

___P___ The child feels guilty about resenting her mother though she doesn't want her to fool around.

11. (Boy, age 9 years) I know Mom wants me with her. But she can't right now. She has to get a house and furniture and stuff. But I know my mom wants me.

___G___ The child wants very much to go home to his mother and he is afraid she doesn't want him and that she is using excuses not to take him right now.

___P___ The child is sharing his anticipation of happy days ahead when he can be with the mother he loves so much.

___F___ The child can hardly wait to get home to his mother and is sharing his excitement and anxiety with his foster mother.

**********

NAME:

ADDRESS:

How long has this child (children) been with you?

_____years_____months

When did you start fostering, ie: date first child placed with you? _____

Appendix C

Letter to Parents Selected at Random from City of Edmonton Telephone Directory

Dear Sir and Madam,

I am a graduate student with the Faculty of Educational Psychology at the University here. As a research project, one with practical application, I am investigating a method whereby the procedure for selection of foster parents may be improved.

Your name and address have been selected randomly from the City of Edmonton Telephone Directory. If you meet all of the following criteria, I would find it most helpful if you would complete the enclosed tests and return them to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed.

The criteria are:

1. You are a couple, living together.
2. You are parents (regardless of the age of your children).
3. You have no experience as foster parents.

This last qualification (ie. #3) is needed so the answers of foster parents can be compared with a cross section of other parents. Please complete the tests without consulting one another about your answers. Please have the man complete the one marked FATHER and the lady the one marked Mother.

Please leave no blanks on the tests.

It is unnecessary to sign your name.

Thank you very much for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours truly,

NV/eb

(Mrs.) Nadine Vester

Encl.